

Submitter: tom whittaker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB1589

I have lived in Wilsonville since 1975, and enjoyed swimming, fishing, and paddling the Willamette River since. I have lived on the River, at River Mile 40, in what is called the Newberg Pool, since 2001. I have since then enjoyed boating on that same stretch of River.

With the advent of wake sports, and in particular, wake-surfing, that part of the River has not only become less friendly and safe for many River users (swimmers, paddlers, water skiers, fishing), but the shoreline has had an increased acceleration of erosion as a result of the wakes produced for wake sports. Natural erosion has always occurred on the River banks, but the wave action from wake boats hits the shore at almost a right angle, and is very different in character and energy than the natural flow of the River. I used to often see crawdads and other marine life along the shore of where I live, but that has not been the case in the last several years. Wake surfing has, in my mind, clearly had an adverse impact on the shoreline environment of this stretch of the River.

For years, the Marine Board has mainly looked the other way when presented with science based evidence, and has sided with the wake boat industry in ignoring the threat to the River environment. There are now a number of science based peer-reviewed studies clearly demonstrating the increased height, energy, and potential damage to shorelines of lakes and Rivers as a result of wakes from wake surfing in particular. With an average width in the Newberg Pool of 600', there is not nearly enough distance for wake energy to dissipate before wakes hit the shore. Wake surfing should only be allowed on large bodies of water with shorelines that are not nearly as erosion-prone at the Willamette River, from River miles 30 to 50.

I urge support of this bill, and would be happy to discuss this further. Unfortunately, I'll be traveling on the date scheduled for this bill. Please pass it with a strong message to protect the Willamette River.